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Conceptualizing travel bragging from a dual perspective

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Abstract

Travel bragging refers to showing off or boasting about travel experiences. Although travel bragging is increasingly ubiquitous on social media, this topic has been largely under-researched in academia. The present study aimed to explore travel bragging through a qualitative approach from both travel braggers' and audience's perspectives. Based on data from 30 semi-structured interviews, this study provided a systematic conceptualization of travel bragging, which included the definition of travel bragging, how to distinguish travel bragging from travel experience sharing, motivations of travel bragging, the influence of travel bragging on both travel braggers and their audience, as well as their coping strategies in response to the negative impacts of travel bragging. The conceptualization of travel bragging highlights the perception gaps between the travel braggers and the audience in identification of travel bragging, motivations of travel bragging and the emotional experiences of the audience. Further, this study contributes to the WOM (word of mouth) literature by uncovering the positive and negative influences of travel bragging and the underlying mechanisms. Managerially, this study generated important implications for destination marketing organizations, individuals, and policy makers related to travel bragging.

Key words: travel bragging, social media, conceptualization, perception gap, dual perspective